

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
July 8-9, 1999 – Sturgeon Bay

Notes

(prepared by Bill Horns, July 12, 1999)

Present: Steve Hogler, Terry Lychwick, Bill Horns, Mike Toneys, Brad Eggold, Brian Belonger, Pradeep Hirethota, Jim Moore, Ron Fassbender (7/8 only), Matt Coffaro, Tom Hansen (7/8 only), Paul Peeters, Jim Francis, Dave Weber (7/8 only), George Boronow (7/9 only), Bob Topel, Al Blizel (7/8 only).

Next Meeting: Sheboygan, September 8-9, 1999.

This is a summary of decisions, recommendations, and planned actions arising from the July 8-9 meeting. It is not intended as a comprehensive review of all discussions. Note. The LMFT charge requires that all team decisions or recommendations be considered during at least two meetings and requires that any recommendation developed at one meeting be ratified at the following meeting. Recommendations and decisions made at any meeting are considered ratified at the following meeting if not raised for discussion and review during consideration of the previous meeting's notes at the second meeting or placed on the agenda for discussion at the second meeting.

- 1) Meeting notes from April 29 were considered. No changes were suggested and no decision items were raised for reconsideration.
- 2) Future direction on chub rules for the winter period. Because new rules, if any, need not be implemented before January, 2001, we have time to discuss this issue fully during the summer. Mike Toneys will have a report on two years of incidental catch data in time for discussion at our next meeting.
- 3) We discussed external funding opportunities. I agreed to compile a summary document listing the funding sources, deadlines, and eligible work.
- 4) Commercial Fishing Task Force. We had a full discussion of some of the issues before the Task Force. Tom Hansen has prepared and circulated a summary of the discussion. Briefly -
 - a) Lake Trout harvest. The LMFT did not endorse the proposal by commercial fishers to open either a targeted or incidental catch lake trout fishery.
 - b) Credit for services. The LMFT did not endorse the request by commercial fishers that they be credited for services rendered to fisheries management during routine on-board monitoring. When fishers make special trips or otherwise significantly alter normal fishing practices to assist in a special study, they may negotiate a cooperative agreement to receive compensation.
 - c) Menominee. The LMFT raised no objection to considering Menominee an incidental species, rather than a quota species.
 - d) Accounting for commercial fishing management costs. To facilitate accurate accounting of staff time devoted to commercial fishing, I will look into the Department-wide use of one or more special activity codes to report time spent on Great Lakes commercial fishing.

- e) Involvement in work planning. Commercial fishers have access to work planning
 - a) through the strategic planning process (Lake Michigan Integrated Fisheries Management Plan), b) through the advisory role of the Commercial Fishing Boards, and, possibly in the future, c) through the establishment of a permanent partnership team modeled on the Commercial Fishing Task Force.
- 5) Fish production. The Team discussed the message we should take to the annual fish production meeting this August. We agreed to the following:
 - a) Rainbow trout. We would like the production system to accommodate the proposed trial introduction of new rainbow trout strains by raising all of the new rainbows at one hatchery. It is possible that some Salmon Stamp funds are available to help make this happen. We understand that this will involve not producing brook trout for Lake Michigan and moving some brown trout to a northern hatchery.
 - b) We would like to see some re-routing of brown trout yearlings next spring (as discussed at the pre-production meeting) to equalize the distribution of Wild Rose strain fish between the two Lake Michigan regions.
 - c) We are happy to see that the number of Wild Rose strain brown trout being raised for Lake Michigan for stocking in 1999-2000 is greater than in past years, and are not, at this time, requesting any additional changes in brown trout production.
 - d) Although we will probably be looking for ways of producing more yearling coho in future years, we are not, at this time, requesting any changes in coho production.
 - e) Issues for future consideration. The LMFT has a number of additional concerns for future discussions with production personnel.
 - i) trucking distance
 - ii) brown trout strains
 - (1) preference for Wild Rose domestic brown trout over other domestic strains
 - (2) possibility of favoring WR for yearling fish and St. Croix strain for fall fingerlings
 - (3) Seeforellen/domestic ratio
 - iii) size of fish at stocking
 - (1) large size at stocking is generally preferable for browns and rainbows
 - (2) but, for cohos the recent practice of post-smolt stocking may be a problem
 - iv) bird predation on stocked fish
 - v) genetic selection at the weir
 - vi) the need for well-controlled studies to address production questions
 - f) We have developed a modest balance in the Salmon Stamp account. Although we must keep some funds on hand to deal with emergencies, we would benefit from a prioritized list of minor (up to approx \$30,000) projects related to salmon and trout production, so that when funds are available they can be directed where most needed.
- 6) Charter reporting. We discussed the letter to charter captains announcing our intention to produce a scaled-down charter report this year. Dave Weber discussed the LE questionnaire dealing with reporting. Dave will have a more detailed report at a later date. Tom Hansen said he would circulate to the Team some old data dealing

- with charter fishing reporting. I will notify Mike Staggs, Susan Sylvester, and GEM about this issue, our plans, and possible controversy.
- 7) Commercial fishing boat safety. Mike Toney reviewed the issue, including his conversations with the Coast Guard. A CG report on this issue is expected in the near future.
 - a) Mike and Paul will discuss this with Charlie Henriksen this week.
 - b) The issue will be brought to the LMCFB for discussion.
 - c) I will discuss administrative rule options with Pete Flaherty.
 - 8) Rainbow trout.
 - a) We will move ahead with plans for the experimental introduction of two rainbow strains.
 - b) We will produce a final Plan for signatures (I will get a Tech Rept number and Steve/Brad will produce the final version for routing).
 - 9) Walleye stocking in Milwaukee River. Some NOR walleyes are being held for possible stocking this fall as extended-growth fingerlings. The Team voted 7 to 2 in favor of stocking the NOR walleyes in the Milwaukee River, but, because consensus was not reached and the Policy Committee opposed stocking 2 to 1, the stocking proposal was not endorsed. The only concern with the proposal is consistency with statewide genetic management guidelines. Jim Francis will discuss the issue with the statewide Walleye committee.
 - 10) Report on the coho study comparing yearling and fingerling cohos. Brad's draft report was discussed at some length.
 - a) All team members should send written comments on the draft report to Brad.
 - b) Brad will seek publication of a manuscript focusing on the yearling/fingerling issue.
 - c) Brad will also pull together a broader overview report, not for publication, summarizing issues related to coho rearing and stocking.
 - d) I will talk to Paul Rasmussen about statistical issues in the analysis of the data.
 - 11) We discussed project funding for 1999-2001. I will circulate the latest information I have about final allotments.
 - 12) We discussed the external task force (John Casselman, George Spangler, Kim Scribner) formed by the Lake Michigan Committee to review the technical issues surrounding our disagreement with Michigan about whitefish in northern Green Bay. There may be a need to come up with some travel funds to bring the task force together once or twice. Mike and Paul will approach Charlie Henriksen about the possibility of financial support for this from the whitefish fishers.
 - 13) We discussed the report "An Economic Impact Study of Lake Michigan Rainbow Smelt", prepared by students at the UW-Green Bay. I agreed to send copies to one or resource economists for comment.
 - 14) Lee Haasch stopped by to share his concerns about recent poor steelhead fishing and to ask for our thoughts about the issue. Mike Toney and Paul Peeters will stay in touch with Lee. I agreed to send a heads-up message to Staggs, Sylvester, and Meyer, but by this morning GEM had been contacted directly and briefed by Staggs.
 - 15) The next LMFT meeting will be in Sheboygan on Wednesday and Thursday, September 8 and 9, 1999.